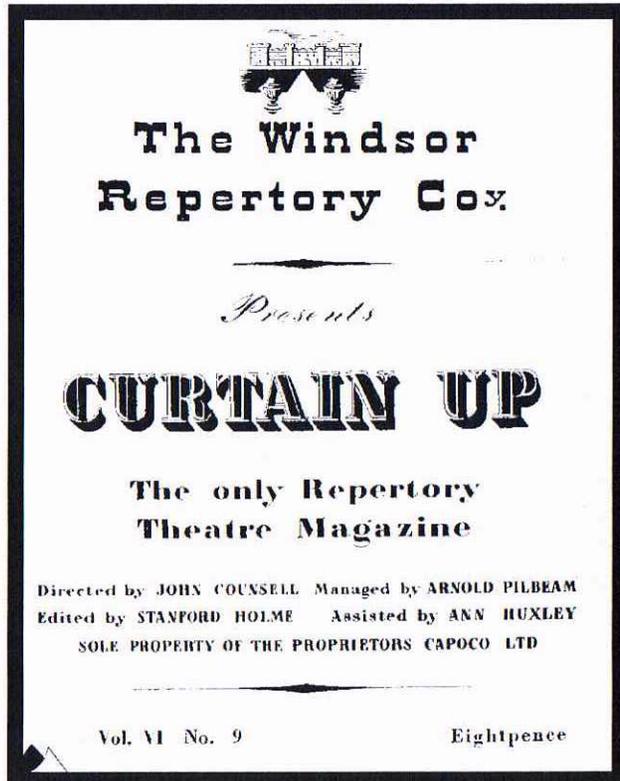


## Curtain Up!



Some 559 editions of Theatre Royal programmes, dating from 1948 to 1991 are to be found in the Royal Borough Collection's Museum Store. Unfortunately a few of the programmes are missing but this does not detract from the overall collection. Also deposited there is a file containing indexed material of the theatre performances and advertisements from both Windsor and the surrounding area.

The programmes were recently donated to the Collection and contain a mass of material covering the history of the theatre and everyday happenings. These are recorded with humour and illustrated with many photographs.

Both the format and front cover were periodically changed. The 1948 programmes were priced at 6d with approximately 10-12 pages. By June 1991 the cost was £1 for 20 pages. Many editions have extra pages as they feature special productions, Royal visits, festivals, or the annual pantomimes, which are a very colourful and entertaining attraction to families over the Christmas holiday period.

In July 1948, John Counsell, licensee of the theatre, wrote an introduction to *Curtain Up* outlining the aims of magazine, which were to keep its readers informed of activities, plans and problems, as well as wider ambitions. Articles often featured "off-stage" members of the company, past and present. A correspondence column for the public to air its views was introduced, and occasionally a theatre review was included. John Counsell's articles were always worth reading, with his unique form of wit, in anecdotes and information. Also worth reading are "Sugar and Cream" from the Coffee Break.

A selection of items of interest:

- July 1948** "Old Friends Make News" – members of the company – Avice Landon, Mary Kerridge, Peter Gray, William Mervyn  
Highlights of Windsor Festival Programme  
Old Windsor Flower Club provided stage flowers "Policy or What We Are Up To" by John Counsell
- November 1948** "The exquisite Perdita Robinson lies buried in Old Windsor Churchyard" (died aged 26)
- December 1948** Pantomime: *Toad of Toad Hall*
- 24 July 1950** Theatrical posters are the oldest form of advertising, Vol. III, no 11 illustrated by a simple theatre bill dated 1602 and a day bill of the Theatre Royal dated 1810.
- 4 September 1950** The theatrical history of Windsor by R P Mander. Windsor's first leading lady. The article reveals that the theatre built in the High Street in 1793 was on the site of the Post Office of 1950 and replaced a small barn in Peascod Street. The first play was *Everyone has his faults*.
- 18 September 1950** "Wanted – a Wife" (An advertisement that once appeared in Windsor) "Sir John Dinley of Windsor Castle recommends himself and his ample fortune to any angelic beauty of good breed, fit to become and willing to be mother of a noble heir and keep up the name of an ancient family ennobled by deeds of arms and ancestral renown..."